

# APS Forum on Graduate Student Affairs May 2007 Newsletter

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### Introduction

We'd like to welcome you to the inaugural electronic newsletter for the APS Forum on Graduate Student Affairs. We will be issuing these newsletters every 1-2 months, with news of upcoming APS/FGSA events and activities, news from APS, updates from the APS Office of Public Affairs on relevant policy issues, and information on how you can get involved with FGSA.

In this issue, we're highlighting the CAM Graduate Student Conference, (early registration ends Friday, May 25th!). Travel Grant Awards are available for graduate students at US institutions. More details can be found below.

We're also highlighting the APS Washington Office. APS plays a key role in informing Congress and other government officials on issues related to science and policy, and we are working to increase student involvement with the Washington Office in the months ahead.

We'd like to hear from you! If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact the FGSA board at [gradst@aps.org](mailto:gradst@aps.org).

### FGSA Election Results

The votes have been counted (finally!), and we have a number of new officers joining the FGSA Executive Board. Congratulations to Meghan Anzelc (Chair-Elect), Abhishek Kumar (Secretary), Damien Mathew (Member-at-Large), James Maloney (Member-at-Large), and Tracey Wellington (Member-at-Large).

### FGSA and the APS Council

FGSA members now comprise more than 6% of the total APS membership, allowing us to elect a member to the APS Council. The APS Council is the governing body of APS and determines the policies of APS as a whole. The FGSA Councillor, to be elected in the fall elections, will participate in APS Council meetings and vote in Council decisions. This will be the first time that FGSA has voting power in the decisions of APS and marks a huge milestone in FGSA's development. Thanks to all of our members, FGSA will have representation in APS policy decisions!

For more on the APS Council, Councillor duties and previous Council Meeting minutes, see: <http://www.aps.org/about/governance/executive/index.cfm>

### CAM Graduate Student Conference

Once again the APS Forum on Graduate Student Affairs, along with the Canadian Association of Physicists and the Sociedad Mexicana de Fisica, is preparing for their biennial conference exclusively for graduate students in physics and related fields.

The first CAM Conference for graduate students was held in 2003 in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico. More than 80 students from throughout the U.S., Mexico, and Canada came together for a weekend to share their research and to discuss issues of concern for early career scientists. The second CAM Conference was held in 2005 in San Diego, California. The attendees at this conference topped 100, with significant representation from Canada and Mexico, as well as a strong contingent from the host country. This conference highlighted the many scientific

contributions of the graduate student attendees. There were also plenary talks by a number of distinguished guests, including the President of the University of California, Robert Dynes, and the Assistant Director of Mathematical and Physical Sciences for the NSF, Michael Turner.

The upcoming CAM Conference promises to have all of the same potential for you to present the findings of your research to an audience of your peers. And whether you are just completing your first year of graduate study, or are an advanced graduate student (or even a recent PhD recipient), there will be many exciting opportunities to learn about cutting-edge research being done in a wide variety of physics disciplines. There will be networking and career development occasions as well, a highly valued aspect of CAM.

CAM2007 will be held from August 8 to 11 at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. All FGSA members are encouraged to attend, and we expect significant funding support in the form of Supplementary Travel Grants to be available to U.S. attendees. The Early Registration period is now open: registration, abstract submission, and other details are available online via the CAM2007 website (<http://cam2007.triumf.ca>)

The procedure for applying to receive a Supplementary Travel Grant will be communicated to all US students who follow the registration process detailed on the website.

Further information is also available from the FGSA's International Student Affairs Officer, Kyler Kuehn ([kuehn@HEP.ps.uci.edu](mailto:kuehn@HEP.ps.uci.edu))

### **A message from the APS Office of Public Affairs**

APS established a Washington Office ten years ago to represent membership interests with Congress and the federal government. The Washington staff, comprised of four lobbyists, a press secretary and two support staff, focuses their advocacy efforts on science research budgets, energy, defense and education issues.

As a member of FGSA, you can play a critical supporting role for Washington Office activities, particularly for research budget and education issues. Many of you are supported by federal funding (through research grants and fellowships.) Therefore, you can speak first hand to the vital role that federal support plays in attracting students to graduate school and retaining them in the field. As the next generation of the science workforce, you are an important and unique voice.

In its lobbying for science research budgets (e.g., the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy Office of Science and the Department of Defense), the Washington Office relies heavily on APS members. Through signing letters at APS meetings, sending emails to Congress, and visiting their congressional delegation on Capitol Hill and at home, it is the membership that raises the priority of these issues in a Congressional office. The leadership of FGSA also ensures that graduate student voice is present at our annual congressional visits held for Units officers. Your leaders have been a steady (and growing!) presence in these Congressional visits.

In addition to the congressional visits by the leadership, FGSA leadership sent an email alert to the entire membership in mid March, asking you to send emails to your members of Congress in support of science research budgets. 110 FGSA members responded. Despite the 4 percent response rate, we are encouraged by the FGSA response, since this was the first alert sent to its members. We hope that the next alert will be welcomed with a higher response rate, since funding from NSF, DOE, DOD and other federal agencies supports so many graduate students. This increased level of activity, coupled with the many graduate student who took the time to sign letters at the March and April Meetings, will help to secure the science research increases that we all depend on. If you are interested in getting more involved, contact the APS Washington Office: 202.662.8700 or [opa@aps.org](mailto:opa@aps.org).

PLEASE NOTE: If you are interested in getting involved directly at the interface of science and policy, the APS Washington Office is accepting applications for the Science Policy Fellowship. Please contact the office at the phone/e-mail above for more information.